



## Wedded Blis\$

Will gay weddings be a cash cow for Westchester?

**I**N JUNE, NEW YORK PASSED A LANDMARK bill that legalized same-sex marriage, sending waves of joy throughout the LGBT community—and the business community. Companies involved in the wedding industry saw this as their chance to get a much-needed economic boost, after years of struggling through the Great Recession. But, while such an uptick was observed fairly quickly in the New York City, early indicators say it has yet to be realized in Westchester. “I definitely expected an increase in business,” says Dan Fried, owner of H&H Photographers in Irvington. But to date, Fried has met with only one same-sex couple. Still, he remains hopeful that business will increase with the new law.

Catering halls also are hoping for a boost in business. “We were absolutely expecting an increase for all businesses: catering halls, flowers, everything,” says Michael Pasqualini, proprietor of Mansion on Broadway in White Plains. But, again, that increase has been a no-show, for the most part. Initially, he had only three same-sex wedding receptions, but at press time it was up to seven. “We’re looking forward to taking on more and more weddings,” Pasqualini says. “It’s a big part of our population that can now come our way.” He expects that once word gets out that Mansion on Broadway is hosting same-sex weddings, more and more couples will host their weddings there.

Not everyone, though, expected an immediate boost. “We typically work with clients six months to a year in advance,” says Dorothy Mourouzis, owner of Westchester Event Planning Services, Inc., in Thornwood. She predicts that there won’t be an increase for another year—and maybe not until 2013.

“We can always hope,” Mourouzis says.

—Scott Simone

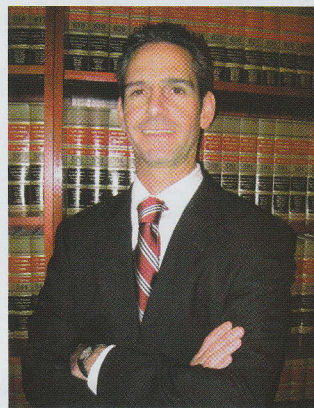
## Lawyer by Day, Adventurer by Night

Climbing the Corporate Ladder—and Mountains

WE ALL TALK ABOUT work/life balance, but Jon A. Dorf, head of the Dorf Law Firm, LLP, in Mamaroneck, does more than just talk about it. By day, you’ll see him behind his desk, dressed in a well-tailored suit and ready to head into the courtroom. At night and on weekends, though, you can see him zip by on the streets of Westchester, decked out in cycling gear.

be,” he says. “It was exhilarating to run through the streets of the greatest city in the world.” The challenge of putting aside time for those intense training sessions was paid back—and then some—by the accomplishment of finishing the marathon.

Dorf didn’t rest on his laurels. The following year, he successfully scaled 14,410-foot-high Mount Rainier. “It was terrific,”



“You have to keep a balance between working hard and what makes you happy,” says Dorf, who graduated from Albany Law School in 1990 and decided to launch his own law firm a few years later. Today, it is one of the most successful firms in the county—an 11-attorney operation, handling hundreds of cases a year.

Juggling both a full workload and out-of-office interests is, of course, work in itself. “Balance doesn’t come through osmosis,” Dorf says. For example, when he decided, in 2002, that he wanted to run the New York City Marathon, he endured six months of intense training. And? “It was everything I had hoped it would

he says. He topped himself again in 2005 by completing the New York City Triathlon. In the coming years, he hopes to climb Alaska’s Mount McKinley.

For most people, finding time to go to the gym is enough of a challenge, never mind climbing mountains and running marathons. But, for those who have managed to find that sweet equilibrium between time spent in and out of the office, pursuing outside interests is as essential to healthy living as eating your vegetables. “I would say it’s critically important to live a balanced life,” Dorf says, and, with the next summit in his sites, you know he means it.

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## CREDIT REPORT

Tarrytown business “credits” the recession for its growth.



**I**N THE THROES OF A SEEMINGLY NEVERENDING recession, it’s not surprising that credit expert Tracy Becker has achieved tremendous success. As president and founder of North Shore Advisory, Inc., a credit restoration and education firm based in Tarrytown, Becker helps both individuals and companies understand and manage their credit—something that’s become increasingly important in this cash-strapped economy.

Originally in the estate-planning business, Becker, who also owns a separate credit monitoring firm called The Professionals’ Professional, discovered her interest in credit after her then-husband was confronted with credit issues of his own. “He was a commercial real estate investor in the eighties, and, because of the housing crash, he had really bad credit,” she confides. “When he started to become interested in the credit industry, I did, too, and we both decided to go into the business.”

She founded North Shore on Long Island, but, 10 years ago, she took the risky move of bringing it to Westchester so she could still work close to home when she herself moved here. Her risk seems to have paid off: in Westchester, North Shore has grown 40 percent in client volume over the past two years. Many of the firm’s clients are individual consumers. “Most of our clients come from mortgage bankers, realtors, CPAs, and financial planners, in that order,” Becker reports. “It’s amazing to me how little knowledge is out there about credit when it can impact so much.”

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